



Acknowledgements

The North Carolina Environmental Education Plan Third Edition was made possible through the work of the N.C. Environmental Education Council and through contributions from dedicated environmental education professionals throughout the state. The Council worked tirelessly with the staff of the N.C. Office of Environmental Education to draft the plan. The draft plan was reviewed by key environmental education stakeholders, including Environmental Educators of North Carolina, the N.C. Environmental Education Fund, the N.C. Department of Public Instruction and the North American Association for Environmental Education. The Office also provided the broader environmental education community the opportunity to review the plan and to provide input. The new edition recommends statewide goals for environmental education and identifies areas that need strengthening. It describes strategies to improve environmental literacy and gives people tools for making informed decisions about environmental challenges in North Carolina. The Office would like to thank Council members who provided their time and expertise to help develop the plan.

The North Carolina Environmental Education Advisory Council

The N.C. Environmental Education Advisory Council is made up of representatives from the academic, business, cultural arts and environmental communities. The council advises, consults with and makes recommendations to the N.C. Office of Environmental Education on the programs and policies of the office. The council also advises the office on its educational efforts and strategic direction and updates the office on trends in education, government, business and the nonprofit sector. The office works closely with council members to determine how it can effectively provide quality environmental education programs and materials that improve academic achievement and increase environmental literacy among the state's citizens. For more information on the council and its members, visit www.eenorthcarolina.org.

Introduction

The N.C. Office of Environmental Education published the first N.C. Environmental Education Plan in 1995 following an 18-month process that included a statewide conference and regional meetings. However, the roots of the plan date back to the 1973 Environmental Education Act, the resulting 1974 Master Plan for Environmental Education and the 1993 North Carolina Environmental Education Act. The plan provides goals and objectives for environmental education in North Carolina and strategies for reaching those goals.

The 1995 Environmental Education Plan allowed the state's environmental education community to provide input in defining and interpreting the legislated mission of the N.C. Office of Environmental Education and the overall direction of environmental education in North Carolina. The plan outlined a broad, long-range vision, and it has performed extremely well as a guiding framework for the office and other environmental educators in North Carolina. In 1999, minor edits were made to a Second Edition of the plan, and photographs were added.

In fall 2006, members of the N.C. Environmental Education Advisory Council began the process of drafting the Third Edition of the Environmental Education Plan. The council met over the next 16 months to develop a draft plan. Though the third edition retains the core goals and definition of environmental education reflected in the 1995 Environmental Education Plan, the plan is enhanced by the perspectives and ideas of a broader selection of academic, environmental, cultural arts, business and agricultural contributors. The result is an effective guidebook for environmental education in the 21st century.